GENERAL VIEW

OF THE

AGRICULTURE

OF

MONTGOMERYSHIRE.

BRITISH MUSEUM
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GENERAL VIEW

OF THE

AGRICULTURE

AND

RURAL ECONOMY

OF

MONTGOMERYSHIRE.

WITH

OBSERVATIONS ON THE MEANS OF IMPROVING IT,

By GEORGE KAY.

DRAWN UP

FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE
AND INTERNAL IMPROVEMENT.

EDINBURGH:
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1794.

TO THE READER.

IT is requeſted that this paper may be returned to the Board of Agriculture, at its office in London, with any additional remarks and obſervations which may occur on the peruſal, *written on the margin*, as ſoon as may be convenient.

It is hardly neceſſary to add, that this report is, at preſent, printed and circulated for the purpoſe merely of procuring farther information reſpecting the Huſbandry of this diſtrict, and to enable every one to contribute his mite to the improvement of the country.

The Board has adopted the ſame plan, in regard to all the other Counties in the United Kingdom; and will be happy to give every aſſiſtance in it's power, to any perſon who may be deſirous of improving his breed of cattle, ſheep, &c. or of trying any uſeful experiment in Huſbandry.

London,
June 1794.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION.

THIS county, on the north, touches upon thoſe of Denbigh and Merioneth; on the weſt, upon the latter and that of Cardigan; on the ſouth upon Radnorſhire; and on the eaſt upon Shropſhire. It meaſures about 40 miles in length, and 37 in breadth, containing about 500,000 acres; and is divided into 6 hundreds, in which are 6 market towns, 47 pariſhes, and about 34,000 inhabitants.

Montgomeryſhire, although the one half of it is barren and mountainous, has a greater mixture of very rich valleys and plains, than many other counties in Wales. Nor are the mountains in general ſo high and conical as thoſe in ſeveral other counties; on the contrary, very large tracts are to be met with, which are capable of being ploughed, and otherwiſe improved. They are all at preſent commons, undivided and unincloſed. Of the level tracts, the moſt conſiderable is that through which the Severn flows. This river (which, next to the Thames, is the moſt remarkable of any in Great Britain,) has its ſource on the ſouth weſt part of this county, at Plynlimmon mountain, running in almoſt an eaſtern direction to Llanydlois, where it turns to the northward, and enters Shropſhire on the eaſt, below the Brythen hills. This beautiful vale extends all the way to the county of Cheſhire, meaſuring above 70 miles in length, but its breadth is very various. The vales and lowlands of this county are all encloſed, and in many places there are very valuable old plantations. The lands are employed in paſture and huſbandry; but paſture is the moſt prevalent, being liable to a much ſmaller tithe than the corn lands. Wheat, oats, barley, rye, peaſe, and ſome turnip, potatoes and clover, are the only crops cultivated in Montgomeryſhire. It is worthy to re-

mark, that this county neither contains free ſtone, limeſtone, nor coal in itſelf, but that all theſe very neceſſary articles are found, in great plenty, on the borders of ſome one or other of the adjoining counties, from which it is ſupplied. Peat or moſs, for fuel, is got in very great abundance from the mountains, which lie chiefly on the weſt and north part of the county.

Soil.—The moſt prevalent ſoil in the vales of this county, is a very productive loam, mixed with a little gravel. .The higher arable lands incline more generally to a ſtubborn tenacious clay, upon which lime has a moſt powerful fertilizing effect, when applied to fallow. The commons, or mountains, are compoſed of a great variety of ſoils, (which, in my opinion, are in many places capable of immenſe improvements, were they divided, encloſed, drained, and a proper arrangement of plantations to take place,) but the moſt predominant could not be eaſily aſcertained.

Climate.—The climate in Montgomeryſhire is reckoned very moderate in the lower parts of the county; but in the mountains, which are all uninclоſed, and without any kind of ſhelter whatever, it is rather bleak, conſequently leſs friendly to vegetation. The ſeaſon for ſowing wheat and rye is in October and November. Peaſe in February and beginning of March; Oats early in March; and barley in April and beginning of May. Harveſt is commonly reaped in Auguſt and September, and generally *got in* in excellent condition. The operations of huſbandry are ſeldom interrupted by long continued rains, or by ſnow, for any length of time.

Wood Lands.—In the numerous and extenſive rich vales, with which this county abounds, there are many old plantations of oak, ſome of the proprietors of which are cutting them down, without thinking of ſupplying their places with new ones; which neglect may, ſome time or other, be ſeverely felt in this county, eſpecially when it is conſidered, that there is neither freeſtone nor limeſtone yet diſcovered, nor are there coal to burn bricks, ſo that wood is the only ſubſtitute for

houſe

houſe building. It is true, there are ſome proprietors that have not altogether overlooked the rearing of young plantations; but in a county like this, deſtitute of other materials for houſe building, it will appear very obvious that no gentleman ſhould ever loſe ſight of raiſing trees; and as the diviſion of the commons or waſte lands is much to be wiſhed for, a certain proportion of them might be laid out in plantations. Wood grows amazingly well in Montgomeryſhire, and the few young plantations I ſaw, which conſiſt of a variety of different kinds of trees, are in general better protected from the depredations of the cattle, than they are in many of the Welſh counties.

Incloſures and Fences.—The cultivated parts of this county are moſtly incloſed, and the fences are in general old, conſiſting of an intermixture of hawthorn, hazle, crab, &c. as in Flintſhire. The incloſures are of various ſizes, from 2 to 20 acres, and have been found to increaſe the rent *prodigiouſly*.

Draining and Embanking.—I have again and again mentioned, in the courſe of this ſurvey of North Wales, that draining ought to be the firſt thing attended to in farming, being the moſt eſſential. It is however as much neglected in Montgomeryſhire, as in many other of the Welſh counties. There are innumerable fields to be ſeen, full of ruſhes and other aquatic plants, from the want of this very neceſſary improvement, which in their preſent ſtate yield almoſt nothing; whereas, were the proprietors to drain them completely, (which might be done at an eaſy rate,) they would ſoon become as productive as the moſt fertile land of the county. I confeſs I was very much ſurpriſed to find ſo very little attention paid *to this*, the moſt uſeful branch of huſbandry; and the more ſo, when I ſaw, in ſome *gentlemen's* pleaſure grounds, ruſhes growing, that would abſolutely diſgrace a Scotch *farmer*. With the farmers in this county, improvement is entirely out of the queſtion, as no leaſes are granted but from year to year; the covenants of which are extremely oppreſſive, but ſeldom or never inſiſted on. I have no doubt, however, that were leaſes granted on liberal

liberal terms, that the farmers would not be ſo inattentive to their own intereſt as many of the proprietors are; but, on the contrary, it would encourage them to acts of induſtry and improvement in the ſcience of agriculture. To this ſcience, leſs attention has been paid in North Wales than in any country I have hitherto been acquainted with, notwithſtanding its very great importance to all ranks and claſſes of people. As to embankment, there are many places along the banks of the river Severn, as well as ſome of the ſmaller rivers in the county, where it might be done to very great advantage. I know there are ſome proprietors in Montgomeryſhire, that entertain a notion that an embankment could not withſtand the rapidity of the rivers; which, however, I am inclined to think a very great miſtake, becauſe in Merionethſhire, the adjoining county, Edward Corbet, Eſq; has embanked a large track, that not only reſiſts the overflowing of a river, but alſo the attacks of the raging weſtern ocean, to which it is expoſed; the expence of which did not exceed, upon an average, 2s. 6d. *per* yard. But we need not go to another county to refute this idea; for in the vicinity of Welſh pool, there is a conſiderable track embanked, and no doubts are entertained of its ſtability, although ſituated on the banks of the Severn. There are alſo other tracts of land, that are very frequently inundated, and ſometimes the crops are ſwept away, which might be prevented by embankment.

Roads.—The roads in Montgomeryſhire, both public and parochial, are in the moſt wretched ſtate of any in North Wales, or perhaps in Britain; notwithſtanding of which I did not ſee a ſingle perſon employed in repairing them, which appeared to me very extraordinary, eſpecially as turnpike gates are as frequent as on any roads in England, and I was told the collections at them were very great. There muſt therefore be ſome want of œconomy in the application of the money, or ſome other cauſe, which I cannot account for. There was one practiſe which I obſerved, that deſtroyed the roads *prodigiouſly*, viz. the manner in which the waggon wheels are ſhod. They are

abundantly

abundantly broad, but the iron is drove on, in ſhort pieces, with large headed nails, projecting two or three inches, which not only tear up the roads, but alſo add great reſiſtance to the draught; thus, more horſes are employed than would otherwiſe be neceſſary, were they ſmoothly ſhod. I will venture to ſay, that narrow wheels, ſhod with a ring of iron, would do much leſs damage to the roads, than thoſe done in that rough manner, however broad they may be. This mode of ſhoeing wheels, is very common throughout North Wales, and may in a great degree acount for the number of horſes uſed in the carts and waggons. The only reaſon aſſigned for this practice is, that theſe long headed nails preſerve the ſhoes of the wheels, but the nails coſt more *per* hundred weight than the ſhoes themſelves, and therefore there can be no ſaving; on the contrary, more horſes are required, and the roads are continually harrowed up, if I may uſe the expreſſion. There is no county in Britain, where good roads are more neceſſary than in Montgomeryſhire; eſpecially when it is conſidered, that that very neceſſary article, lime, is driven in vaſt quantities all over the country, and uſed as a manure. There are ſome inſtances where it is driven 40 miles, and coal as far. And as there are no navigable rivers, except the Severn, which only becomes navigable a little below Welſh pool, a town on the eaſtern part of this county, immenſe quantities of oak timber are carried from all the different plantations, many of which are at a very great diſtance from Welſh pool. Theſe heavy carriages no doubt damage the roads, which cannot be altogether avoided from the large, weighty pieces of timber; but inſtead of putting two or three pieces upon one clumſey waggon, were only one placed on a waggon of a lighter conſtruction, the roads would ſuffer leſs, and the expence of carriage would be diminiſhed. If the funds ariſing from the collections at the turnpike gates, with the aſſiſtance of the ſtatute labour, ſhould be found inadequate to the expence of making good roads, and keeping them in proper repair, the toll or tax ſhould be raiſed, which, inſtead

of being an additional burthen, would be found in a very great degree to diminiſh the expence of the carriage of every article, by requiring fewer horſes ; for it is an incontrovertible fact, that one horſe, on a good road, will do more work than two in a bad ; conſequently, by improving the roads, goods may be brought to market at one half the expence, which is an object well worth attending to. I was told, too, that the non reſidence of the truſtees, under whoſe management the roads are, was another reaſon why they were in ſo very bad a ſtate. I have only to mention one thing, that will prove a very great relief to the roads, and of the greateſt utility to the county at large, and that is a canal, which is now begun to be formed, and when finiſhed, will be found to be one of the greateſt improvements ever thought of for this county. Lime and coal will then be brought in at an eaſy rate, and that very weighty and bulky article, wood, beſides many others, will be exported at a very trifling expence in compariſon of what they are at preſent. The line of the canal, I underſtand, is to run through the moſt fertile parts of this county ; but having no opportunity of ſeeing the plan, I cannot deſcribe its exact direction.

Waſte Lands.—Full one half of Montgomeryſhire, I was informed, conſiſts of waſte lands or commons, which are chiefly depaſtured by ſheep, and innumerable ponies, with a few cattle ; and here, as in other Welſh counties, the commons are all denominated mountains, although ſome extenſive tracks are to be ſeen, as far as the eye can reach, without the obſtruction of a hill of any conſequence. Theſe might be converted into good arable land, (were the preſent mode of commonage corrected) but at preſent are lying in a ſtate of nature, without the veſtige of a tree or fence to ſcreen them from the blaſts to which they are now expoſed. After a diviſion has taken place, (which, for the good of the country at large, I hope is not far diſtant,) the firſt thing to be attended to, in the improvement of land of this deſcription, is draining, and next, ſufficient fences and plantations, laid out judiciouſly, ſo as to afford proper ſhelter

to

to the fields. Then crops might be raiſed, that would amply repay the expence of improvement. In converſing with ſome gentlemen in this county, about improving waſte lands, in the manner I have now deſcribed, they treated the idea with ridicule, as being chimerical and too expenſive. That there are ſome lands incapable of being improved, or rather, that the proper method of improving them has not yet been diſcovered, I will not deny. But the objections ſtated againſt the improvement of the waſte lands in Montgomeryſhire were, that they were bleak, and in many places abounded with moſs and heath. Their bleakneſs may be eaſily accounted for, from the total want of plantations and fences; and, as to the moſſy lands, I have only to appeal to the improvements made by Edward Corbet, Eſq; in the adjoining county of Merioneth, to whom the gentlemen in this county ought to be very much obliged for his exertions, would they but profit by them. When he firſt began to improve his moſſy or turbary lands, his neighbours looked upon him as a madman, and treated his ſcheme with the utmoſt ridicule, notwithſtanding of which, he now draws 50 *per cent per annum* for the money laid out, which is the ſame as buying an eſtate at two years purchaſe. Many other inſtances might be given, were it neceſſary, where moſs has been highly improved; and, as rivers and rivulets abound in this county, the flooding of the moſſy lands might be practiſed, after being properly drained; which would be attended with great ſucceſs. It is a fact well aſcertained, that the watering of heathy ground ſoon deſtroys the heath, and that abundance of ſweet, healthy, and nouriſhing graſs, is produced. There are many places in Scotland, where the land is now encloſed and cultivated, that formerly preſented a more barren appearance than a great part of the waſte lands in Montgomeryſhire, and pays well for the expence of improvement. The commons in this county are in townſhips, and the land-marks are well known. The ſhepherds occaſionally pay them a viſit,

to

to prevent the animals from rambling, or going beyond their limits, which indeed very ſeldom happens, except in the ſpring months, when the mares are in ſeaſon, when it is abſolutely impoſſible to keep them within their own bounds, and is therefore very rarely attempted; but ſo ſoon as that is over, they come back to the grounds on which they uſed to paſture, as if by inſtinct. The ponies live conſtantly on the mountains, until they are old enough for the market, and a number of wedders alſo winter there, (which are looked after by ſome cottagers, that reſide on the borders of the commons,) neither of which are allowed any other food than what they can gather, and conſequently many ſtarve in hard winters.

Watering of Lands.—The flooding of land has long been practiſed in this county; and although it is commonly done in a very ſlovenly manner, yet great advantages have been derived from it. By the general method uſed, you may obſerve ſome parts of the field covered with ſtagnant water a foot or two deep, while other parts are not touched. This proceeds entirely from careleſsneſs, in not levelling the land ſufficiently, ſo as to receive the water equally. Great attention ought alſo to be paid to the conductors, by giving them the neceſſary declivity and no more, and placing the ſtops at proper diſtances, ſo as to diſtribute the water very equally along the ſurface of the field, but this is alſo neglected in many inſtances. The difference of expence in doing a thing properly, and executing it in a heedleſs manner, is very trifling. And in an operation of this kind, where its greateſt advantages depend on the nice manner in which it is done, it is aſtoniſhing that people ſhould not always finiſh it in the moſt complete manner. It is entirely needleſs to recommend to the gentlemen and farmers of this county, the propriety of flooding their lands, as its fertilizing qualities are perfectly well known; but I ſhall mention one circumſtance, that appeared to me to be in a great degree neglected, which is, the watering of hills and ſloping grounds, and which can be done, where water can be commanded, with

greater

greater facility than even plains; for in ſome of the vales, there is ſcarcely a declivity ſufficient to keep the water in motion, which is abſolutely neceſſary in this operation. I ſhall alſo mention, from the beſt information I could obtain, that the water is commonly applied for at leaſt fourteen days, when it is diverted into another field, if practicable, and then uſed for the ſame length of time. This ought never to be omitted, eſpecially if the ſtream is ſmall, and will not afford a ſufficiency of water to the whole; firſt one part of a field may be flooded, and afterwards the reſt of it.

Farms.—The farms in this county are occupied by tenants at will, and are in general ſmall, renting from 5 l. to 100 l. excepting a few in the vales, that amount to 200 l. and ſome as high as 300 l. Of the arable land, it is reckoned that one half is employed in paſture, and the other half in huſbandry. The rents are very various, being from 2 s. 6d. to 50 s. *per* acre, according to the ſituation and quality of the ſoil. Wheat and oats are more generally cultivated than any other crops; and barley is more commonly raiſed than either rye, peaſe, potatoes, clover, or turnips.

Rotation of Crops.—It is impoſſible to ſay which is the moſt common mode of cropping in Montgomeryſhire, there being ſuch a variety of methods purſued; but I will endeavour to point out thoſe rotations that are moſt generally followed. There is a cuſtom, which prevails in this county, and in no other in North Wales that I could hear of, which is, ſowing rye mixed with wheat, generally on fallow; a practice that deſerves to be reprobated, as the two grains never ripen equally; the proportion is $\frac{1}{4}$ of rye to $\frac{3}{4}$ of wheat; the reaſon aſſigned for it is, that ſome ſeaſons are more favourable for wheat, and others for rye, by which means they make ſure of a crop of the one or the other. But where this is practiſed, an abundant crop is ſeldom reaped; as the rye is ſo much earlier than the wheat, it very often happens, that it is almoſt all ſhaken, before the wheat is ripe for the ſickle. To ſave, however, as much as

poſſible, ſome farmers plough down the ſhaken rye, ſo ſoon as the crop is removed, which anſwers as ſpring food for the cattle; then the field is prepared for a barley crop, with which rye graſs and clover are ſown. It is cuſtomary to ſow 15 lib. of red, and 5 lib. of yellow clover; and when the field is laid to paſture, 5 lib. of white clover is added, and a ſtreak of rye-graſs, which contains exactly 10 Engliſh gallons, is commonly allowed to an acre. In the fertile vales, it is uſual to take only one crop of graſs or hay; then the field is limed and prepared for a wheat crop, which generally yields from 20 to 25 ſtreaks *per* acre, which is ſometimes followed by peaſe, but more frequently by oats or barley, with graſs ſeeds. Both wheat and rye are often ſown by themſelves, after fallow; 2d year, barley; 3d and 4th, oats, with graſs ſeeds. It is alſo common to plough up the wheat field immediately after the crop is removed, and to ſow rye for ſpring food. Where turnips are cultivated, they are commonly ſown after oats or graſs. The land is ploughed before winter; and in the ſpring, ploughed again and again, until it is ſufficiently clean; it generally receives the ſeed furrow in the beginning of June, when the turnips are ſown broadcaſt, which, however, would anſwer much better in drill. Barley, with graſs ſeeds, invariably ſucceeds the turnips. There are, however, ſome of the farmers that ſow oats and barley alternately; and others, oats after oats, until the ground is quite exhauſted. Green crops are much ſeldomer cultivated than they ought to be.

Corn Meaſure.—The corn meaſure varies in different parts of this county. In ſome places, the Wincheſter buſhel is introduced, containing eight Engliſh gallons; but the common meaſure of the county is called a ſtreak, containing ten gallons, with which wheat, rye, barley, and peaſe, are meaſured. The malt meaſure contains only nine gallons, and the oat meaſure is always heaped, and the cuſtom is to ſell ſeven half ſtreaks *heaped*, which contains five gallons of water.

Price

Prices of grain.

Wheat ſold this year at, from	7s. 6d.	to	9s. 0	*per* ſtreak.
Barley, -	5s. 6d.	to	6s. 6d.	*per* do.
Peaſe, - -	6s. 0	to		
Rye, - -	8s. 0	to	8s. 6d.	*per* do.
Oats, -	15s. 0	to	16s. 0	7 half ſtreaks heaped.

The prices were much higher than they commonly are, owing to a ſhort crop. Hay ſold at 4l. *per* ton.

The average produce of wheat is 22 ſtreaks *per* acre.

Barley, 23 *per* do.
Peaſe, 20 *per* do.
Rye, 20 *per* do.
Oats, 6 meaſures, which is equal to 27 common ſtreaks.

Manures.—The chief manures are lime and dung. Compoſt dunghills are very ſeldom attended to. The beneficial effects of lime, as a manure, is aſtoniſhing, which muſt evidently appear from its being able to defray the expence of land carriage of 40 miles. But the time is not far diſtant, when this county will be greatly relieved from the enormous expence of the carriage of this very uſeful article, as well as many others, by the canal that is now forming.

Implements of Huſbandry.—I found very little difference, in reſpect to the implements of huſbandry, throughout North Wales; only the Rotheram plough is more generally uſed in ſome counties than in others, which is the caſe in Montgomeryſhire, and the harrows wider ſet in the teeth, which is an improvement. As to other implements of huſbandry, I ſhall only mention, that there are no drilling machines; 3, 4, and 5 horſes are employed in a plough, and draw in a line. Oxen are alſo uſed; but from the long carriage of lime, they do not anſwer ſo well as horſes, and therefore are more ſeldom uſed.

Farm Houſes and Offices.—All the farm houſes and offices in this county are built of oak. When the frames are finiſhed, they are neatly interwoven with thin pieces about the ſize of a

pipe-

pipe ſtave, but not quite ſo thick, which is afterwards plaiſtered with lime. There are ſome of them very commodious, and others the proprietors are improving; but by far the greateſt part requires a great deal to be done in that way. In this, as in other Welſh counties, a great quantity of dung is loſt, from the want of proper accomodations for the cattle; and the ſcarcity of that article is more ſeverely felt, as Montgomeryſhire in itſelf poſſeſſes no other manure, that has yet been diſcovered, which ſhould be a very ſtrong incitement to gentlemen to make convenient offices and farm yards for their tenants.

Labour.—The rate of wages for a huſbandman in this county, varies from 6l. to 10l. *per annum* with victuals, according to his abilities; and a day labourer gets 1s. *per* day in winter, and 1s. 2d. in the other ſeaſons, without victuals, excepting in harveſt, when he is allowed 1s. *per* day with victuals.

Proviſions.—The price of beſt beef and mutton is from 3d. to 4½d. *per* pound averdupois; veal from 2d. to 4d. according to its ſcarcity at the different ſeaſons; a pair of fowls from 8d. to 1s. 4d.; ducks a pair 2s.; a fat gooſe from 2s. to 3s.; a turkey 2s. 6d. and a good roaſting pig; 2s. 6d.

Live Stock.—The one half of this county being commons, which does not amount to leſs than 250,000 acres, chiefly employed in ſheep walks, thoſe animals are reared in immenſe numbers in Montgomeryſhire, moſt of which are ſent from all the different parts of the low country, to paſture upon the mountains. They who live at a very great diſtance, ſend only wedders and hogs, but they that are nearer, ſend their whole flocks. The ſtrongeſt of the wedders are left there during winter, the others are brought down to the lower grounds generally about Michaelmas, and are ſent up again in the ſpring, according to the forwardneſs or backwardneſs of the ſeaſon. Sheep are the ſtaple of this county, of which there are a great variety of breeds, none of which can be ſaid to be a pure and diſtinct ſpecies, being croſſed by other breeds. On the weſt and ſouth parts of this county, there is a ſmall white faced

faced kind, not unlike thoſe of Merionethſhire; and farther north and eaſt, there is a black-faced home-breed, not much larger, which is highly eſteemed for its hardineſs. The breeds in the rich vales are conſiderably improved by Engliſh rams, chiefly from Shropſhire. The ſheep on the high grounds are more wild than thoſe in the valleys, nor is their wool ſo fine; and the reaſon aſſigned for it is, they pay leſs attention to croſſing the breed. The carcaſe, upon an average, weighs about 40 pound averdupoiſe; the weight of the hind and fore quarters is nearly equal. They are clipped once a year, and produce from 1¼d. to 1½d. pound of wool, worth 1s. *per* pound, wool white. The more improved breeds weigh from 12 to 14 pound *per* quarter, and clip from 2 to 3 pound of wool *per* fleece, worth 1s. 2d. *per* pound, the wool alſo white. The practice is to ſhear the lambs in Auguſt, a ſcore of which produce about 8 pound of wool, worth from 6d. to 7d. *per* pound. The lambing ſeaſon is February March and April, one lamb at a birth, very ſeldom two, pretty well wooled when born. The wool is all manufactured in the county, principally into flannels, a great part of which I was informed was ſent to Shrewſbury in Shropſhire, in a rough ſtate, to be finiſhed, previous to its being exported. The ſmaller mutton is reckoned in perfection at 6 years old, and the large at 4. It is impoſſible to ſay, from the great variety of breeds, and from the different kinds of paſture, what is the preciſe quantity of tallow produced; but I was told, that a good wedder, well fed, yielded from 8 to 10 pound.

The ſheep in this county are ſeldom allowed any thing but graſs, except in a very ſevere winter, when they are permitted to eat at a hay rick. There are a few farmers that raiſe ſome turnip, of which their ſheep partake along with the cattle; but the quantity cultivated in this county is ſo ſmall, as to be ſcarcely worth taking notice of. The diſeaſes to which the ſheep in this county are moſt liable, are the ſcab, rot, and worſt; the laſt I never heard of before, and could not get it properly defined. The ſtaggers is another diſeaſe, which however is

not ſo common as the others. The loſs one year with another is reckoned at 7s. *per* cent, and no cure has hitherto been found out for theſe diſtempers.

Black Cattle —A great many black cattle are reared in Montgomeryſhire. In the champaign country the breeds are moſt excellent, being croſſed by the beſt Engliſh bulls; and famous cows are alſo brought from England; but in the more hilly farms, the breeds might be greatly improved, were the ſame attention paid to croſſing. It has been found that the croſs breeds are equally hardy with the pure native breed, and much more profitable; but the generality of farmers in North Wales, are ſo much prepoſſeſſed in favour of their own native breed, that they never think of changing it. The weight of an ox, at 4 years old, fed on the hilly diſtricts, is from 6 to 7 ſcore *per* quarter; and at 5 years old, about 8 ſcore, which are ſold from 5 l. to 8 l. *per* head. The weight of tallow, when fat, is from 40 to 50 lib. and the weight of a hide, from 45 to 55 lib. In the vales, the cattle weigh from 9 to 11 ſcore *per* quarter, at 4 years old; and at 5, from 11 to 13 ſcore, and many much heavier. A pair of good cattle have been ſold in this county as high as 33 l. which, after being fed in England for 12 or 13 months, were ſold for 60 l. at Smithfield market. Were the farmers to raiſe more green winter food, the breeding and feeding of cattle would be a much more lucrative buſineſs than it is at preſent. The dairy is by no means a principal object in this county. The colour of the cows, moſt generally preferred, is a blood red, with ſmoaky faces.

Horſes.—Montgomeryſhire has long been famous for an excellent breed of horſes, particularly of the draught kind, which, I was informed, were originally from England. Great credit is due to the gentlemen and farmers, for giving encouragement to the Engliſh ſtallions that are brought into the county, by which means their ſtock never degenerates. The colour moſt generally liked is black, and the horſes are well ſhaped, hardy, ſtout and active; and when the bad ſtate of the roads, and the heavy

heavy draughts they have to pull, beſides the long journeys they have to perform, are conſidered, they require every poſſible qualification that a horſe can be poſſeſſed of. It appeared very ſtrange to me, to ſee three, four, and ſometimes five of theſe fine animals employed in a plough, working in a line, as is the general practice in North Wales, And it makes little difference whether the ſoil is ſand, loam, gravel, or clay, or whether the fields are hilly or perfectly level; for in all theſe caſes, the ſame number of horſes are commonly uſed There are alſo many ſaddle horſes reared, of all deſcriptions, from the hunter down to the Welſh poney; but by far a greater number of the latter; indeed, I believe, that Montgomeryſhire breeds more of thoſe poneys, than any two counties in North Wales. They are allowed no other food than what the mountains or commons produce, and they are there kept till they are three years old, the age at which they are commonly ſold. Many of them do not fetch more than 30s. and ſome are ſold as high as three guineas. This breed, I was informed, is exceedingly hardy, but had greatly degenerated in point of ſhape and ſize. The cauſe of this, I was told, proceeded from a total neglect to the ſtallions, all of which are allowed to roam indiſcriminately, both good and bad, till they are fit for ſale, which practice, I believe, is contrary to an expreſs act of Parliament; whereas formerly, blood ſtallions were brought from England, for the improvement of the breed, and thoſe only were kept of the fineſt ſhape and figure, and the others were caſtrated to prevent them from hurting the ſtock. Upon the whole, this is a very uſeleſs animal, fit only for a young boy to ride upon, though it is very frequently employed as a beaſt of burthen, for which it is very ill calculated.

Swine.—The breeding of pigs is as common in Montgomeryſhire, as in any county in North Wales. They are reared and fed in the ſame manner, and moſt of them alſo are ſent to England.

Towns

Towns and Manufactures.—Montgomery, although the capital of this county, is a ſmall place without trade. Welſh Pool is the moſt conſiderable town in Montgomeryſhire. There is beſides Newton, Llanydlos, Machunlleth, and ſome others of leſs note, at all of which, and over all the county, the woolen trade is carried on, which is the only manufacture. A new mill is erecting in the neighbourhood of Machunlleth, for carding and ſpinning wool; and in ſome of the towns are ſpinning jennies, (as they are called) that ſpin 24 threads at a time, but the wool is generally ſpun on common wheels. There are many capital falls of water for machinery, in Montgomeryſhire, and I ſhould conſider it of vaſt importance, to have more mills erected for carding and ſpinning of wool.

THE END.